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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains a self-appraisal inventory and some tips on job hunting which are intended to assist women who have not worked for a while, have never held a job before, or want to change careers. The self-appraisal inventory is designed to help the user pinpoint educational and vocational experiences, skills, and special abilities that will be of interest to a prospective employer. The job hunting tips are designed to help the user determine career goals, identify educational and training needs, find employment opportunities, and prepare for the employment interview. (BM)

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job search tips for women

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WHY DO WOMEN WORK?

Women today work for a variety of reasons. Economic necessity is the primary motivator. Thirteen percent of all families in 1975 were headed by single, separated, divorced, or widowed women. One in three of these families is living at or below the poverty level. By contrast, only one in eighteen families headed by a man lives at or below the poverty level.

Women also work to supplement family income. The additional income may be used to help meet current expenses, finance college educations, create a savings account or purchase luxuries.

Another reason women work is to find personal fulfillment. They may view work as a means of making a significant contribution to society. For others, work is a welcome relief from the household routine; it is an opportunity to broaden their experience.

SO YOU WANT TO FIND A JOB . . .

If you have never held a job before, have not worked for a while, or want to change careers, you may be wondering how to go about finding a good job. What should you do first? Completing a self-appraisal inventory can be very helpful in your search for employment because it pinpoints the education, experience, skills, and special abilities that will be of interest to a prospective employer. This information can help you in planning a course of action and preparing employment letters, applications, and resumes. Take a few minutes to fill in the following information.

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I. EDUCATION

(high school, vocational training and college)

	Schools	Dates Attended	Principal Course of Study	Degree	Extra-Curricular Activities	Honors
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

II. WORK HISTORY

(Be sure to include all of your previous jobs, including part-time, summer, free-lance, and volunteer.)

	Name of Employer	Address	Dates Employed	Job Responsibilities	Reason for Leaving
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

III. SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Skills learned on past jobs which could be useful in other positions.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Abilities such as initiative, imagination, leadership, organization, willingness to follow orders, attention to detail, and ability to work closely with people.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

ARE YOU READY TO WORK?

Now that you have completed your self-appraisal inventory, you are ready to begin career or job preparation. In choosing a career, occupational demand should be an important consideration since you will naturally want to find employment when your training is completed. Career opportunities for rewarding employment are subject to both the applicant's skill and experience and to labor market demands. Changes directly affecting employment needs are continually occurring in business, industry, government, and education. The shift from a goods-producing to a service-producing economy is expected to continue into the 1980's. This will mean more jobs for people in the areas of health care, trade, repair and maintenance, government, transportation, banking, and insurance. The most substantial rate of growth is expected to occur in the professional and technical occupations.

One of the key factors in career advancement is the development of personal employment goals. In determining your career goals, you need to consider your preferences and capabilities relating to employment needs by asking yourself the following questions:

1. How many hours a week am I willing to work?

2. How much am I willing to travel?

3. Where do I want to live? Am I willing to relocate?

4. Do my work interests and family needs/desires clash? Have I discussed my job needs with my spouse?

5. What are my personal and job performance strengths?

6. What are my personal and job performance weaknesses? In what areas do I need improvement?

7. Under what conditions do I function well?

8. Under what conditions do I function poorly?

9. Will I need any particular education or training?

10. What problems will I encounter in working towards my goals?

Generally speaking, women have not been encouraged to develop career goals for themselves. To achieve career advancements, you need to develop a plan of action. Your plan should be realistic, flexible, and subject to revision whenever necessary. It is much easier to communicate an interest in advancement to an employer if some short and long-term goals based on training and talents have already been developed. Barriers to the attainment of the goals should be determined so that steps can be taken to overcome or minimize the barriers including the acquisition of further education or training.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Is a college degree really necessary in the attainment of your career goals? Many women feel that their lack of academic credentials is a barrier to career planning. It is taken for granted that everybody has at least a bachelor's degree. The woman seeking a satisfying career may believe that she too needs a college degree to be competitive in the job market. If your sole objective in getting a college education is to find a satisfying career, you should consider the following Department of Labor estimates for 1975.

There will be 4,300 new jobs for psychologists while colleges will award 58,430 bachelor's degrees in psychology.

Of the 104,000 students majoring in communications and journalism, 90,000 will have to find jobs in other fields.

Only 1,900 foresters will be hired in 1975, yet colleges will be graduating twice that many.

About 80% of the jobs to be filled during the 1970's will not require a college education.

Earning a college degree is both a time-consuming and expensive process. The prospective college student needs to consider her objectives carefully for the following reasons:

1. Few careers follow a straight, orderly path from specific curriculum to beginning jobs on up to the top, all in the same field.

2. Many jobs performed by college graduates do not require or utilize the college education. In fact, a college education may be viewed as miseducation in some cases.

3. Employers are looking for basic skills that are first developed, then transferred to a totally different application.

4. Effectiveness in dealing with people is frequently considered more important than any identifiable book learning.

Nevertheless, despite the present poor labor market outlook for some college graduates, a college degree can be considered a worthwhile investment for the following reasons:

1. A college education exposes the student to important ideas and resources, helping the student to become more well-rounded and flexible.

2. A college degree provides a key to admission, i.e., it is frequently viewed as a convenient screening device by personnel departments. The applicant is assumed to have

an above average capacity for learning and completion of projects. It also demonstrates motivation.

3. The degree may provide a ticket for faster upward mobility.

4. The professional occupations are those which generally require at least a college education. Many employment opportunities will be open to women who are prepared for professional positions outside the narrow range in which they are now concentrated.

Basically, a college degree provides a vehicle for vertical and horizontal mobility. However, it is not the only vehicle available to the career woman. Therefore, you should carefully weigh the pros and cons of obtaining a degree in order to meet your own career objectives.

Specialized training in a trade can be obtained in the form of vocational education from private schools, junior colleges and correspondence courses. Many of those who enroll get excellent training and advance as a result of their experience. Nevertheless, the prospective student needs to be wary of misleading sales practices and advertising which can result in a waste in time and money.

The following suggestions may be of value to the future jobseeker.

1. Check the present and future employment conditions for the trade in which you are interested.

2. Check the employment requirements for the occupation to be sure that the training actually qualified you for the work.

3. Investigate several schools to determine the cost of training. Public schools may be less expensive.

4. Study your personal attributes such as interests, aptitudes, temperament, etc. for the occupation, and your ability to do the course work and complete the program.

5. Check to see if the school is licensed or accredited by a reputable agency.

6. Call the Better Business Bureau to see if they have received any complaints about the school.

7. Beware of any school that guarantees a job after training or implies that the graduate will start at a high position or salary. Rarely does an individual finish a training course and capture a top-paying job without experience.

Apprenticeship programs also offer career training possibilities for many of the crafts and technical trades. Apprenticeship is a training system based upon an agreement between the apprentice and the employer by which the apprentice receives on-the-job training in a skilled craft or trade.

Apprenticeship programs are conducted through the voluntary cooperation of labor, management, schools and government, throughout the country. In many areas of the United States, the principal crafts have established joint apprenticeship committees of six members, three from management and three from labor. The joint apprenticeship committees are responsible for their crafts' local apprenticeship programs.

The committees test and select both male and female applicants who are then registered with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training or with the State Apprenticeship Agency. The committees supervise and evaluate the variety and quality of the apprentice's work experience and certify the apprentice as a journeyman after the completion of a specific program. For young people just beginning to enter the working world, apprenticeship offers several advantages. It is an effective way to learn skills because the training is closely supervised and organized to ensure maximum learning.

The apprentice is learning while earning an acceptable wage. Starting pay is usually 40 to 55 percent of the journeyman's going rate. In most areas, pay will vary from $2.50 to $5.00 an hour. The apprentice who makes satisfactory progress receives an increase in pay every six months, until he or she is earning about 90 percent of the journeyman's current rate during the final six month apprenticeship period. There are also fringe benefits such as paid vacations and holidays, insurance, hospitalization, and pension plans.

Who qualifies for the Apprenticeship program? Each state has different requirements, but generally the apprentice must:

1. Be in good health.

2. Be between 17 and 26 years of age.
3. Be good with the head and hands.
4. Have a high school diploma or G.E.D.
5. Pass an entrance examination.

SEARCHING FOR EMPLOYMENT

After career goals have been identified and appropriate training and job skills have been acquired, the next step is finding a job. Searching for a job can be a frustrating and traumatic experience for the unemployed, particularly if the jobseeker doesn't know where to begin.

For psychological as well as practical reasons, begin your job search at once. It is a temptation to take a short rest or vacation; however, by delaying the job search one may miss valuable job opportunities. In addition, the longer you are out of work, the more suspect your credentials become to some employers.

The job search should be an organized venture, starting with a well-written resume. If seeking a professional, technical, administrative or managerial position, a typewritten resume is usually expected by hiring officials.

To hold the attention of a busy employer, a resume should be neat and brief, highlighting job experience and education relevant to the job opening. To favorably impress the employer, the resume should be designed to provide the employer with the information needed to effectively assess the qualifications in terms of the job opening.

Along with a resume, a cover letter, personally addressed to the executive making the employment decision, is needed. The letter should emphasize how your strengths blend with the needs of the firm. The letter should be followed by a personal phone call within a week or two.

Friends and business acquaintances can be of great help in the job search. They may pass the word that you are seeking employment and inform you of companies that are hiring people with your talents.

The local library contains a vast array of job search materials. Directories of manufacturers, local phone directories, industrial guides, directories of engineering companies, etc., may be found there. These materials provide mailing information needed for the resume.

The local newspaper is another tool for the unemployed. The ads usually specify the manner in which the employer should be contacted. The jobseeker may be instructed to respond by phone, by personal visit, or by sending a resume. A good reply to a blind ad is a short, well-written letter indicating your special qualifications.

Employment agencies, both state and private, are also aware of job opportunities. They arrange employment interviews for qualified people. Private employment agencies generally charge fees for their services. The Job Service, which is jointly operated by the U.S. Department of Labor and the state employment security agencies, handles thousands of jobs daily and charges no fee to either jobseeker or employer.

THE INTERVIEW

For most of us, one of the most difficult aspects of job hunting is the employment interview. Advance preparation will enable you to conduct your interview with self-confidence. You will need to be able to identify your interests and qualifications concisely, intelligently, and clearly during the interview.

You, of course, have already completed your self-appraisal inventory so you have the information about yourself at your fingertips. You should also find out as much as possible about the firm **prior** to the interview. By being more knowledgeable about the firm, you will be better able to suggest ways you can be of service to your prospective employer. If you still feel unsure of yourself, have a friend ask you questions in a mock interview situation until you feel comfortable and confident. Keep in mind that the purpose of the employment interview is two-fold: to give the employer a chance to see how you handle yourself, and to provide you with the opportunity to become more informed about the firm conducting the interview and the job for which you are applying.

Being prepared for an interview includes checking out your personal appearance. Extremes in dress should be avoided. A neat appearance is desirable because the prospective employer may judge your ability to work by evaluating your personal appearance. Gum, candy, and cigarettes should, of course, be avoided during the employment interview. Friends and family members should be left at home.

If you're a housewife or have not worked in several years, you may be concerned about questions regarding work experience. It may help to list all the different things you've done. Be specific about the different skills you've developed in schooling, volunteer work, community activities, hobbies, and part-time and full-time work.

Although employers are not supposed to ask you questions they would not ask of a male applicant applying for the same job, questions about your marital status, child care arrangements, and your husband's employment may arise. Since training takes time and money, employers are frequently concerned that a female employee will not stay as long on the job as a male employee. Generally speaking, try to rephrase the employer's inquiry in terms of his hidden concerns. Let him know that your marital status will not affect your ability to do the job or the length of time you intend to remain there. Prior to the interview, you should have investigated child care alternatives. If you are asked about child care, let the employer know that you have checked out the possibility and will be able to make arrangements prior to employment.

Emphasize your typing and other clerical skills only if the job demands it. For example, if you are applying for a job as a marketing analyst, credit manager, or accountant, typing ability would not be considered a normal prerequisite.

"Why should I hire you?" is a frequently asked question at job interviews, so don't panic when you hear it. The interviewer has probably already told you what kind of employee he is seeking. This is your opportunity to relate your skills and abilities to what the employer has described. Once again, anticipating this question during your pre-interview preparation will give you more self-confidence during the interview.

Be prepared to state the salary you want, but not until the employer has introduced the subject. This normally occurs near the end of the interview. In discussing salary, be realistic.

If the employer does not definitely offer you a job or indicate when you will be contacted, ask when you may call or learn of the decision. As you are leaving, shake hands and thank the employer for the interview.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

After the interview is over and you have heaved a mental sigh of relief, a critical analysis of your interviewing techniques should be the next order of business.

- How did the interview go?
- Did you talk too much or too little?
- Did you present your qualifications well?
- Did you overlook any qualifications that were relevant to the job?
- What points did you make that seemed to interest the employer?
- Did you interview the employer rather than permitting him/her to interview you?
- How can you improve your next interview?

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Most workers start their career ladders at entry-level positions. This provides the worker with the opportunity to gain work experience, become acquainted with the firm, and develop and demonstrate job talents. This is also the time to develop some personal employment goals. What do you want to be doing in five years? Will you need additional education or vocational training? Your ascent up the career ladder will be more rapid if you take the lead in forging the components needed for your career ladder by obtaining the proper training in advance.